

Gingerbread

A Creative Odyssey
By Shasta Sovereign
September 2024



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Dear Reader:

It can be a noun, or a verb. It can be used as a medicine. It can be used for spiritual purposes. It can be used also for desserts and comfort food. It seems to be in most cultures across the world. Something we can easily take for granted. Let us give you another hint. It rhymes with timber.

Yes, you got it. GINGER.

What we love to use ginger in most is gingerbread. It is that time of the year when we start to hibernate and spend more time with family. And nothing beats gingerbread.

What do you like to use ginger in? And what are you ginger about, in life?

We want to hear from you.

In Inspiration,

Shasta Sovereign



Emotional control

By Alice

I finally got my funded trading account, and I managed to make \$100 in profits yesterday. But I was only able to achieve this after 5 years of work on myself and emotional control. Our emotions hold us back from a lot in life, but with work on yourself, You can achieve anything. It was insanely stressful, but I didn't let my emotional suffering sway me From the decisions that I made in the market. Emotional control isn't not having emotions, But not letting them control you

Shasta Sovereign's Question: How have you had emotional control lately?

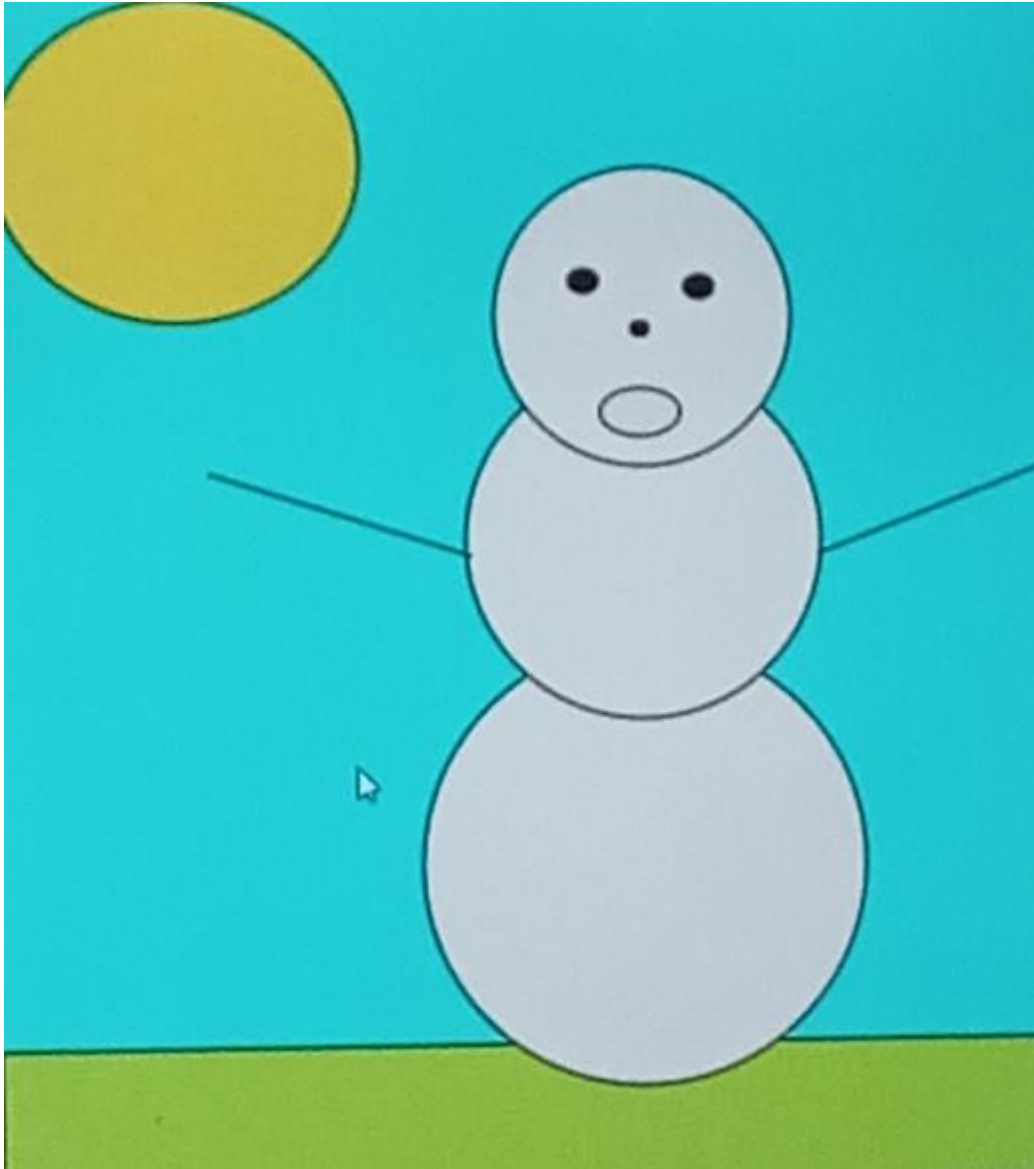


Gingerbread monster doll
By Arlee





Snowman
By Aya





How gingerbread became a tradition

By Babygirl

How gingerbread came to play.

The first documented instance of figure shaped gingerbread biscuits was at the court of Elizabeth I of England.

She had the gingerbread figures made and presented

In the likeness of some of her important guests.

It was tradition in England was for young women to eat gingerbread husband

In hopes of finding a human spouse.

Also, it was tradition

That Queen Elizabeth I made gingerbread men in the shapes of her guests.



Gingerbread home
By Bella





Untitled Childhood poem

By Brit

"Holy Jesus sweet and tender,
Bless my little heart
You're so kind and understanding
I am sure we'll never part"

As I was organizing my Dad's affairs, I came across grade schoolbooks and remembered a poem I had written at a tender age, I would like to share the below. It is a poem I wrote at age 5 when I was attending Marymount Convent School in England. It is important to me as the Convent environment fostered my passion for nursing and the beliefs from which I draw strength today.

Shasta Sovereign's Question: what things have you come across when organizing affairs of loved ones? Have you looked back at your childhood and been surprised at yourself? Where do your convictions come from?

**Dear Grandma**

By Disaster's Grace

Grandma, I can't thank you enough for all that you have done for our family. You have been an amazing mother, grandmother, great grandmother, and the matriarch of our family. I am extremely inspired by you. Not just by your heart and soul, but the way that you carry yourself and the strength that you hold and have shown in times of true turmoil. You have taught me who the Lord is, and that I am worthy of being loved by him and loving myself because of who He made me to be. And I personally have you to thank for that. And I can never thank you enough. You have been the glue that has held our family together for a long time. And I want you to know that your job is done. And you did it with extreme strength, grace, acceptance and love. Although I never want us to part, please do not feel bad to Go. Understand and know that you have taught me well.

And I can go out into this world with the confidence and love that you gave me.

I want you to look forward to the day when you will be finally home. Free from pain and free from suffering.

Home, with your mom, your dad, your daughter, your husband and all the other people up there who are waiting to welcome you. I hope when you get there, it will be more beautiful than you could have ever imagined. You have one of the purest hearts of anybody that I know, so you deserve it. Thank you for always believing in me and accepting me. For loving me for who I am, never giving up on me, and being a true example of what a lady really is.

I know that you will be watching down over me and protecting me. Just like my mom is, and just like my twins are. I'm so excited for you to meet them. Will you please give them a tremendous hug and let them know that there's not a day that goes by that I do not think about them and that I love them with all my heart and soul just as much as I love you.

Save me a seat in the front row grandma. And until then I pray that everyday I can make you just a little bit more proud.

Shasta Sovereign's Question: who do you want to meet in the afterlife? If you have lost a loved love, what do you wish you could have told them in life?



Gingerbread house As-Is

By DLS 35

Austin was 4.

My first born son.

We filled a mixing bowl
with gingerbread cookie ingredients.

Mixed to a gingerbread, cinnamon paste.

Rolled into a pan and baked
filling the home with smells of delight and promises.

With homemade paper patterns
we cut house pieces.

No contractor license or experience.

Icing glued our home construction together.

Solid and stable.

To design our masterpiece, we iced Christmas candies on the home exterior.

Placed it on a living room shelf
for show.

I went to the store.

Came home.

Candies were missing.

By Christmas our cookie home was almost bare
fitting now into a fixer upper gingerbread housing market.

Sold "As-Is".



Gingerbread Spice
By Dorian Green



This is a really good gourmet mail order spice company



Rustic Cabin

By Dudley

The rustic cabin that I now call my home has many treasures contained within in it saved over the span of 100 years and 2 wildland fires that 80 years ago burnt down the main residence, and 10 years ago it happened to the cabin.

There are old yolks, Brands, Horseshoes, bridles, etc. I, being my mother's son, have been collecting and drying Yarrow, Dry Dock and other indigenous species of plant life, so that when the day comes very soon where these items rich with history adorn the walls, perhaps these indigenous dried plants will make a great addition that is "from this earth"

Respectfully,

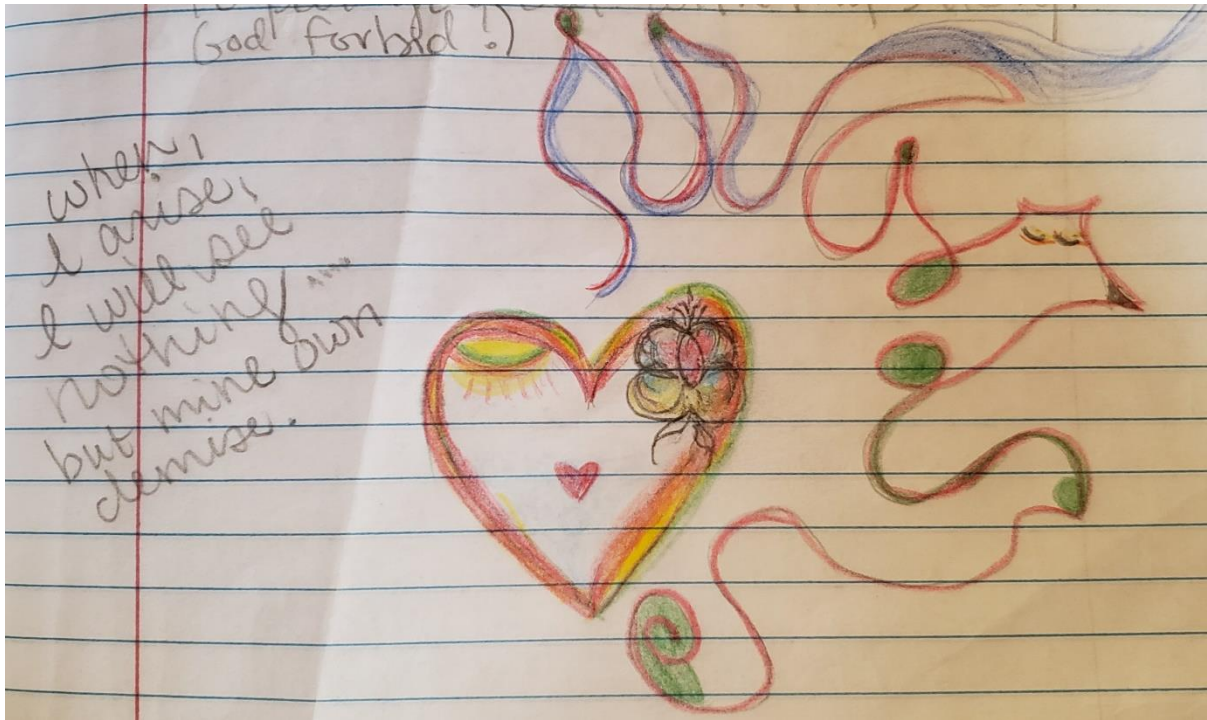
Dudley

Shasta Sovereign's Question: if you could preserve something in your home for the future generations, what would it be?



Arise

By Fire and Rain



Gingerbread Houses

By Fire and Rain

Graham crackers and the sparkling frosting.
 Snowmen made out of 'mellows and jellies.
 Everything seems to shine and glow.
 When people smile, they glow too.
 I miss the days of us...
 Being together.
 We would play games...
 And listen to music.

Funny the things you miss...
 When no one calls anymore.

No more candles...
 and wine...
 and cookies...
 and cheeseball...
 and...

No more laughter.
 No more light in our eyes.

I miss those days.



The World According to Ginger Rogers

By Fred Astaire

The world was her stage,
And gracefully, Ginger gracefully,
Danced backwards every step of the way,
Each and every dance,
Smoothly gracefully, smiling, relaxed yet poised
In my arms and heart
in all our arms and hearts

She ignited our souls
Every single step reminding us
That we too could dance
In any direction on our own dance floors
Gliding backward, sideways, following
By leading the way
In our own ways

Did she return home and become like us?
Soaking swollen feet after hours of labor
Tending to blisters, calluses, and even bunions
Did she paint her beautiful toenails herself
Or luxuriate in a salon while receiving a pedicure?

Did she bake gingerbread men then create
Gingerbread houses for them, every day Christmas,
Did she drink ginger ale or sip ginger beer
Was every dish seasoned with ginger
Just because Ginger touched it?

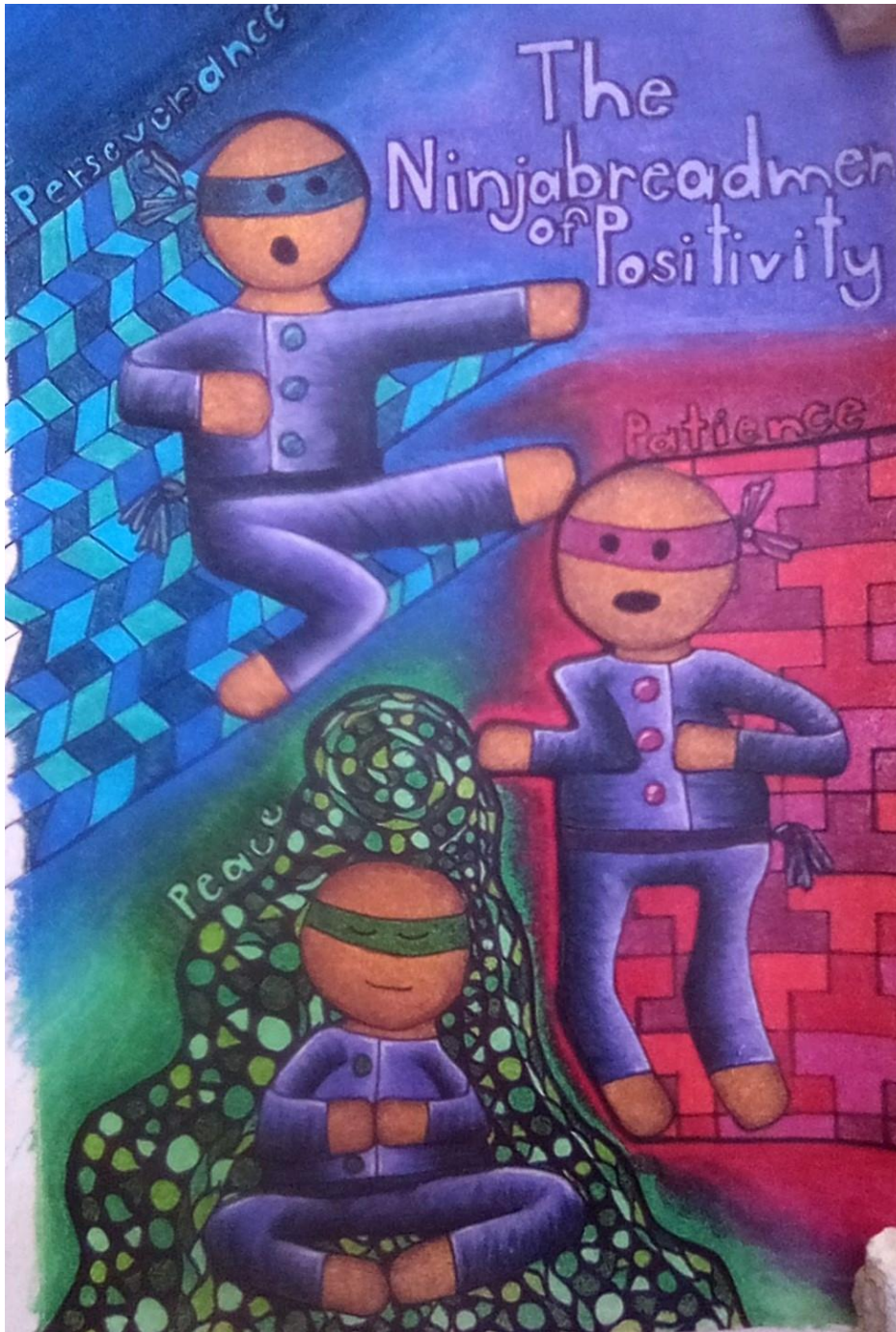
Perhaps we'll never know
What her life off the dance floor was like
But she convinced us her daily life
Did not matter

All that mattered was that we
Dance into every moment of our own lives
Leading, following, any and all directions
Our own.



The Ninjabreadmen of Positivity

By Gimpie



It is colored pencil and ink on paper. I drew it because I have Ninjabreadmen cookie cutters, and it is one of my favorites to use with my kids during the holidays. While I was drawing the ninjas I started running with the notion of comics and action. Which led me to making a picture reminder for myself that 3 things I need to remember to keep my self positive mind set. First is to keep going and use perseverance to get through the hard days. Second, is having patience with others, and especially with myself. Last is the ability to regain and access inner peace, so I can continue with a clear head.



Ode to Gio the Gingerbread Man

Crocheted by Ginger Snaps

Words by Running Wild



There once was a gingerbread man named Gio
 He was born in August, such a strong Leo.
 So Brave was he, a decorated hero
 With his red scarf awarded by Nero,
 Who was the King of Dio (*ancient kingdom)

After all his campaigns
 Gio wanted to Retire
 But just as he was about to,
 He was asked by a sire
 To help him put out fires.

It was a different kind of work
 Where weapons were of no use.
 It was dealing with people
 And hoping to be their muse
 While they defused
 Their triggers, and let loose
 All the bondages holding them back
 And letting their light out of the sack.

Gio would stand entry at the door
 Barely hanging on by a thread
 But, with all being said,
 He came out ahead
 By the wits of his head

Gio is placed on the doorhandle of rooms used by a local psychiatrist for the purposes of good luck, being a sentry, to put smiles on people's faces, and to prevent disruptions in appointments.



Mom and son peach pie
By Golden Sapphire and Junior



A pie I enjoyed making with my son.



Collections

By Golden Sapphire

Part 1

I write to distract my mind.
I can't stop the voices
Nor can I push them away.
Lately I feel like they're winning
Some days I do want to end my life,
So the voices would stop screaming
Inside my head.
I want the pain, the voices,
to permanently go away
But they aren't.
I feel like I'm losing the battle with my mind.
Some days I cover my ears.
Then I remember that it's up inside
So to distract my mind
From hearing the voices nonstop
To help with the PTSD, paranoia and anxiety,
I write nonsense, anything,
To help me cope with my mental health.
Feeling everyone is out to get me
Whether it's bad or good,
I feel like there's a target on my back
Saying
"Hit me."
Not only did I fail heaven
But my mind is failing me as well.
Some days I wish I was someone else
Someone a lot stronger.
I feel weak if I listen to the voices
And end my life like last year.
I have to battle every day
With my mental health.
When I broke,
My mind broke into thousands of pieces
Like cookies breaking
Inside someone's hand.
I feel like giving up to the voices
To end my life.
Or do I keep looking to the future?

Part 2

As the world sits
Silently,
Night waiting for new changes
As the season changes
Uncontrollably,
Waiting for new beginnings



To happen.
Sitting in the dark
Waiting for day light
To beam through
The starry night.
As the moon falls,
Sun raises up beyond
The mountain passes
Waiting for the snow
To come through the clouds.
With heavy burden
Weighing down on my heart.
Broken flower,
Fallen petals.
Broken moon fall
Confusion running
Through my heart
Trying to grasp a dream,
Make it reality
With my heart.
Beating deep with in
Waiting to explode in to
Thousands of pieces
Like a bomb going off.
Wanting to understand
This panic feeling.
Wanting my dreams
To come true
For once.
Letting God smile down upon me
Trying to grip it all
In my hands.
Just want a break
From the stress.
Overwhelming heart break
Wanting to explore the unknown
Of the future.
Taste the future for once
But scared of failure...
Being at the crossroads
Unsure about life
Unsure about anything.
Waiting for the voices to eat me
Alive like sharks.
Everyone has faith in me
But I do not have faith in myself.
I want my dreams
To come true,
But a brick wall is stopping me.

*Part 3*

When your dream
Is about to come true
But your mind stops you.
Still taking that leap
Even when voices up in the head
Are negative.
Due to horrible past
But you still want a bright future.
So you started
Putting your work out there
In the real world
Just to get a call back
Emailed back
From someone, anyone.
Until it finally happened.
So you cry happy joy tears.
When that dream is about
To be in your dreams,
Grip tight,
Smile.
First time crying joy tears
Even with the voices
Up in the head
Are so negative.
But you don't care at this point.
Instead of pushing them away,
I accept the negative voices,
What they say about me
Up in the head,
Someday, one day,
The voices will turn positive.
If I keep at it,
Push them away, ignore,
Think positive thoughts.
Started to push my nightmares away
Slide them away.
Can't change my nightmares
When I die in them.
But before bed,
I think about rainbows,
Fully clouds, with rain fall

Part 4

How could I
Let go of my past
When it still
Hunts me
In my sleep?



How could I heal
When the scares
Run deep with in my heart?
I smile and laugh
So I don't feel pain
So I don't cry those
Endless tears?
How could
I let go of everything
When my childhood
Was a nightmare,
One I couldn't wake up from?
If I don't smile,
I end up crying.
Only time I ever felt
Safe and protected
I was only eight
When he walked
In to my life,
Then walked out.
First time and last time
I ever felt safe
Since my husband
Walked in to my life.
I felt safe again
But my past
Still hunts
My dreams
How could I let it all go,
When I have nightmares?



Stevie's Budget Gingerbread House

By Gus



Stevie made a gingerbread house with some gingerbread guys. It's a farmhouse kind of theme he made on his food table. It took Stevie some hours to make this budget gingerbread house baking gingerbread and frosting the roof with lime flavored frosting, the sides of the walls with strawberry frosting and some chocolate candies on the wall. Stevie thinks it looks really tasty - he wants to eat the whole house and the gingerbread guys!



My Story

By Helen

My grandparents bought me my first pony when I was 7 years old.
When I turned 10, I went to my first horse show and won ribbons and a trophy.
When I turned 16, I got my first job at Burger King
And bought my first horse, won ribbon and trophy with her.
I met my husband when I was 17 and married him at 18.
Shortly after that, I got pregnant with my first baby.
My husband couldn't keep a job, so I had to sell my horse.
Then I got pregnant with my second baby.
I left my husband when I was 21 and moved in with my Mom.
That's when I met Dennis.
We have been together for 35 years.
That's my simple story.



Cute Gingerbread Cottage
By Jadee





Pictures from Montana
Katy





Winter Holiday

By Kim



This family is beginning to decorate for their Winter Holiday Celebrations.



Gingerbread home

By Lo Lo



It's a baby deer and it's mom!



Draymond on da railing

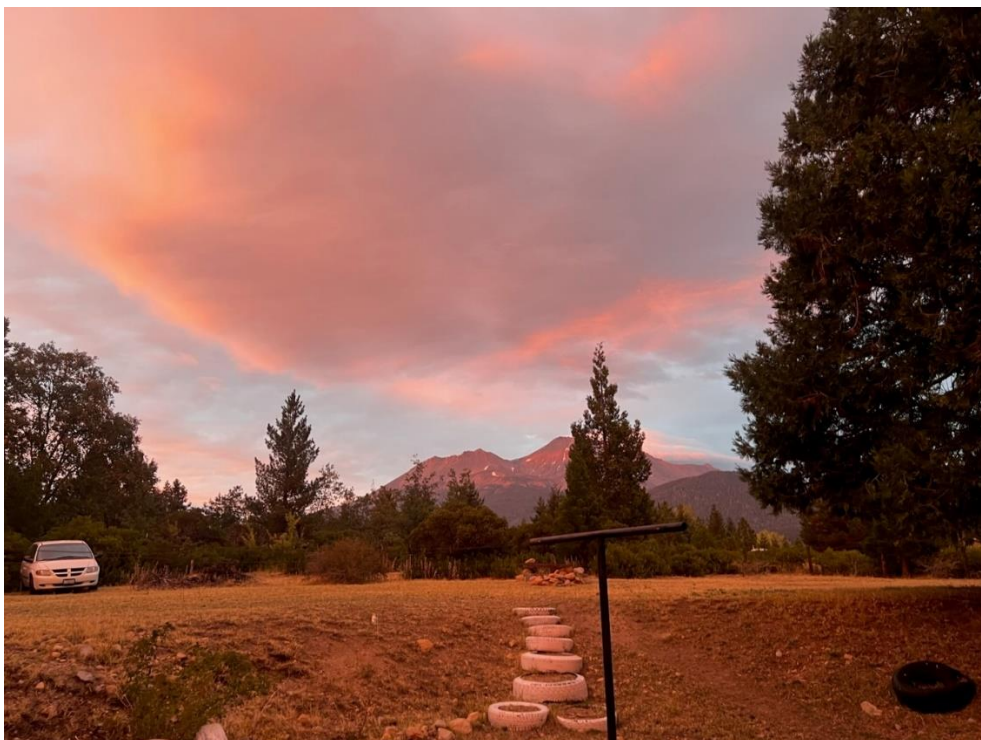
By Loki



My cat Draymond and the other day he was stuck on top of the Travelers Lodge in Dunsmuir.

Mt Shasta Sunset

By Loki



A photo of Mt Shasta with a stunning sunset

**Stuck**

By Lollipop

Do you ever feel stuck?
Like stuck in time?
Stuck in life?
Stuck without making progress?
I have dreams, I have goals, I have the ability, the knowledge
but I don't whatever it takes to make myself reach those goals.
Day after day I wake up and live the same stuck life.
I want so much more for myself.
I want so much more out of life.
It's just outside my grasp.
But I'm stuck.
Staring at what I want.
Knowing that I can achieve my goals, if only.
If only.... what??
What is it?
What is that magic thing that will make me do what needs doing?
Until I find it I am stuck.
Stuck wanting better.
Stuck knowing better.
Time keeps passing.
I'm wasting it.
Stuck.

Shasta Sovereign's Question: What is keeping you stuck? How do you get un-stuck?

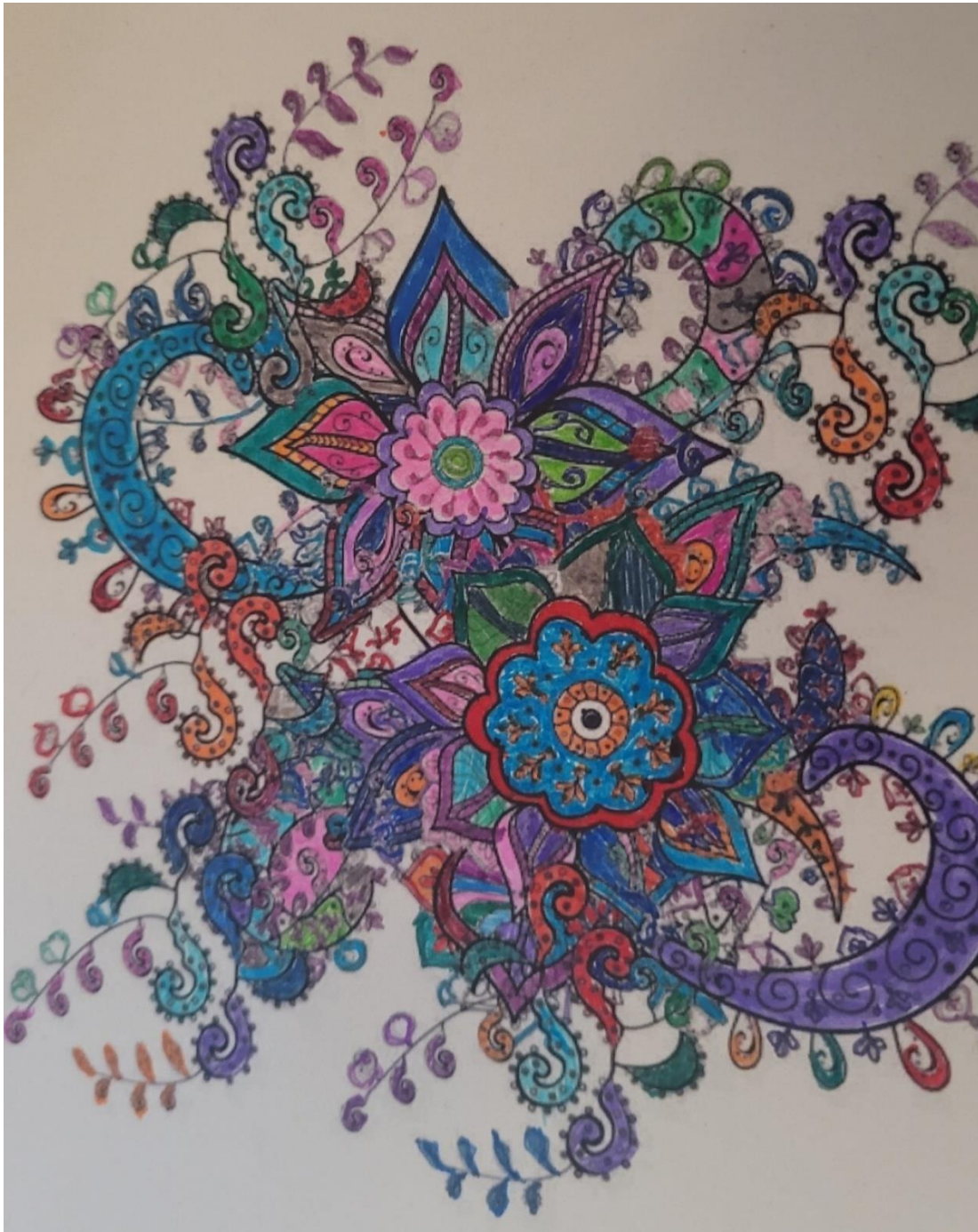


Gingerbread

Louisa Evavistra Torres

I couldn't think of anything about gingerbread but only ginger snap cookies; which were my Grandpa's favorite. I can't eat them now, because I only have one back molar left. But I do have the happy memories of him sharing them with me. So, I was inspired to color this picture. It also helped me concentrate this week, so I could finish my assignment this week for a class I'm taking.

Peaceful Blessings,





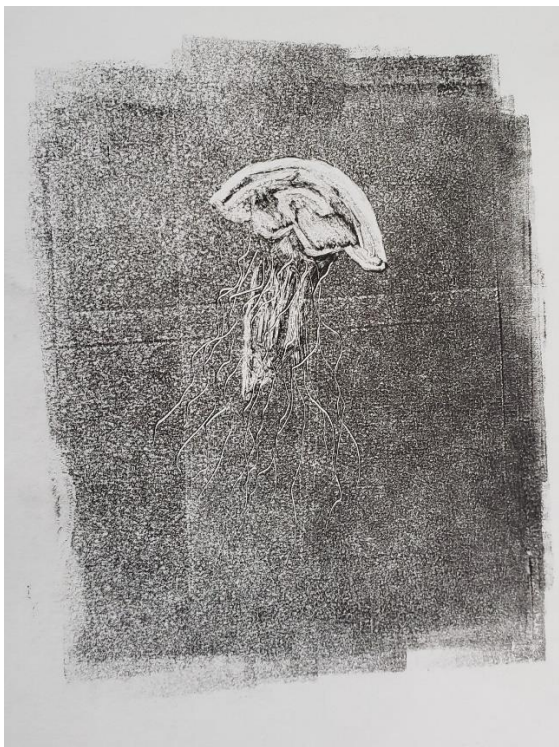
Where is my emotion?

By Lucy



Deep in the Ink

By Lucy



*both are monotype prints I did with a printing press



Honey Ginger Bread Cookies

By Marilyn



These were gifted to me by a dear friend. Honey Ginger Bread Cookie from an Ancient Recipe. It is 100% edible, but it's so beautiful I decided to frame it years ago and enjoy it forever. The honey in the recipe acts as a natural preservative. I enjoy the beautiful delicate decoration and admire the time my friend must have put into it. The Artist is Teri Pringle Wood from Tulelake California. This Cookie belongs to Marilyn.



A Dessert to Remember

By Markus

My favorite dessert is a strawberry pie...

I have never been sure why I love strawberries. Well berries of all kinds, but for a pie, strawberry for sure....

My mom and I used to do sweets on the weekends. She would break out the Betty Crocker cookbook and I knew my day was filled with lots to do. Yes, I enjoyed most of it, just never the cleanup.

So, one day she said it was up to me on what to make. I was a little shocked and horrified to begin with. She was like, I am here, I'm just gonna be doing other stuff, so it's all on you. I started flipping through the book and found the strawberry pie recipe. I showed my mom what I chose and she said we will go to the store and get the stuff needed.

We went to the grocery store and I grabbed a graham cracker crust because I didn't feel I would have time to make one. 2 big flats of strawberries and I'm sure she grabbed stuff for dinner as well. I followed the instructions quite well up until it came to the whipped topping. Mom had to finally show me what I was doing. By the time I had gotten all this stuff done and we all had dinner, it was finally time for the pie.

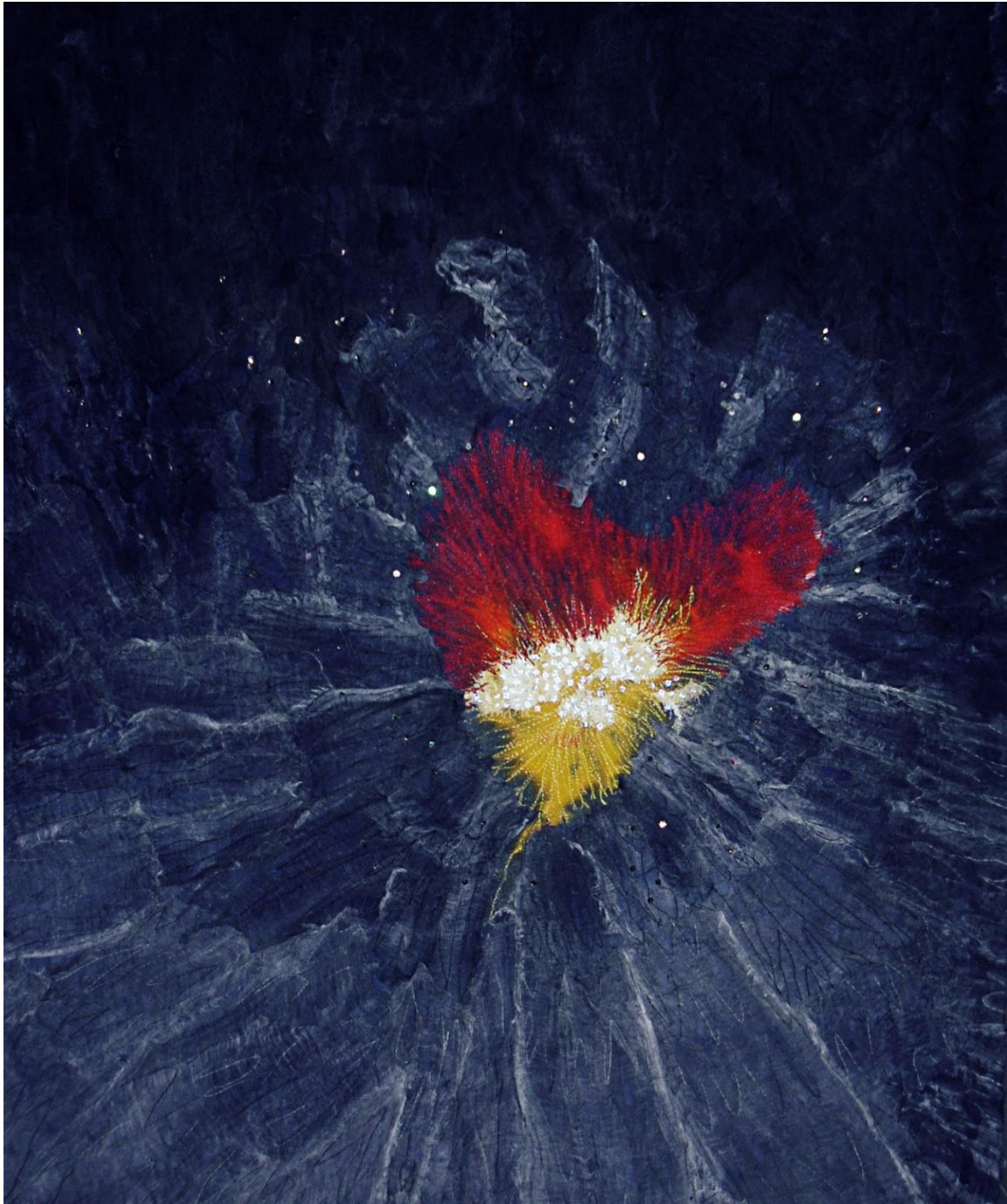
Well, the pie was great, just was not enough. The next time I made strawberry pie, I made 6.

So there would be enough pie for a few days...



Arise

By Michaela Weston



"Wake, O Sleeper, Arise from the Dead"

40"x60" many layers of dyed and stitched cheesecloth surrounding a dyed and stitched heart. Representing the moment of awakening in the I. C. U. after C.P.R., every thing foggy, but the light breaking through.

Shasta Sovereign's Question: Have you had a near-death experience (NDE)? What was it like?



Fox and the girl
By Mikey





Shapes

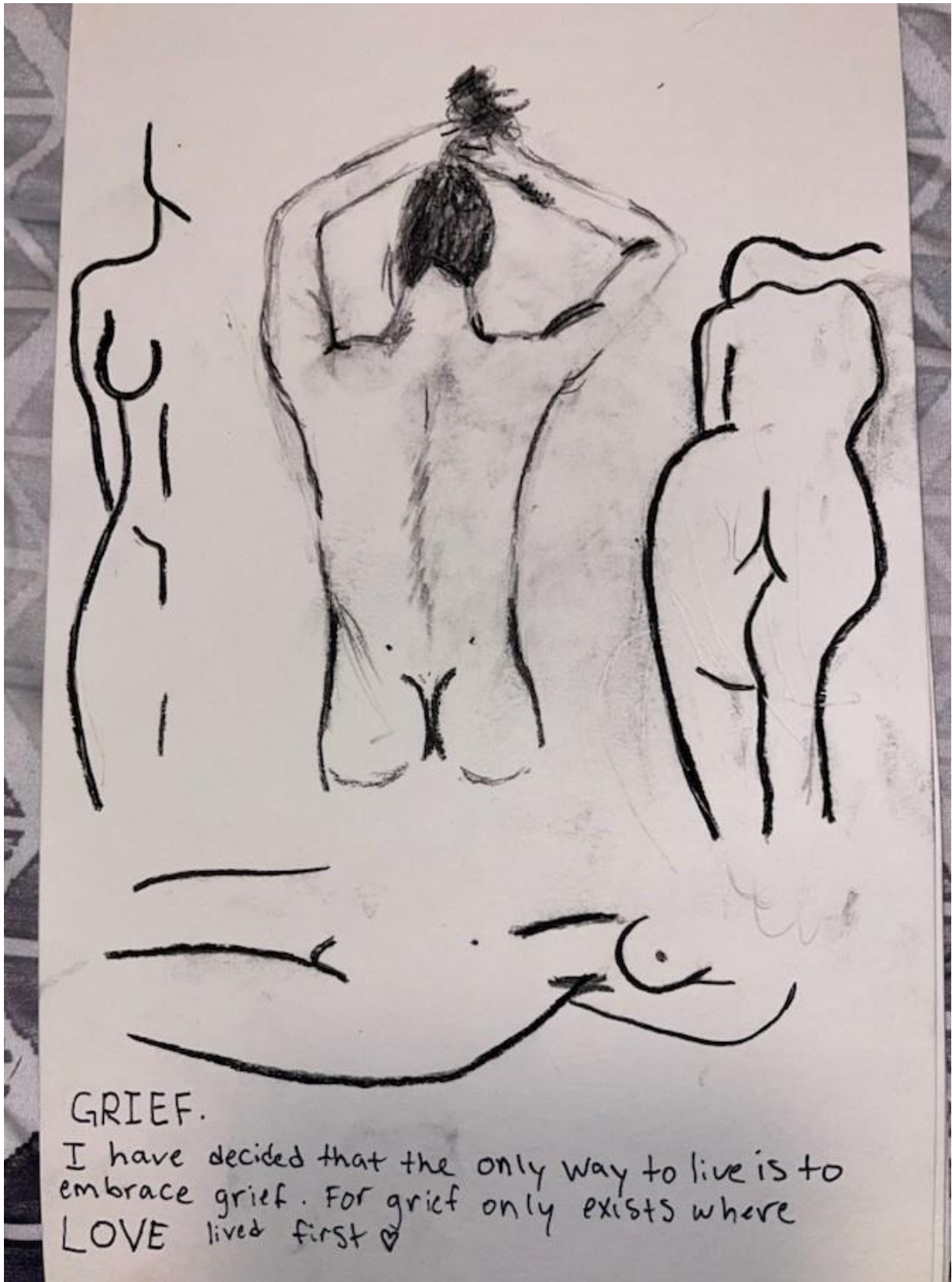
By Mikey





Grief

By Mikey



GRIEF.

I have decided that the only way to live is to embrace grief. For grief only exists where LOVE lived first ♡



There's no place like home

By Montana

A starried wish studded by dye

A pockmark pectin littered by lie

Glued gumdrops dot brown blots

Poly moulded men stillborn red hots

Chateau'd lollipops shunt and siege

Andes Mints n Hershey Kisses breathe

Alone.



Untitled

By Mystery Mister G

Depression and anxiety
Give birth to a suicidal baby
With a lust for life

Wild

By Mystery Mister G



This art piece was made on a vinyl record which read: "Disneyland see hear read, Walt Disney's The Haunted Mansion."

**Mr. Gingerbread with and all things ginger,**

By Ms Kim

The spell of fresh honey lemon ginger tea on crisp summer morning
with sunshine glistening on the freshly watered grass
brings me such joy.

The warmth of ginger in pumpkin spiced muffins from Starbucks
and spice chai scones from my family
also reminds me of early fall settling in.
Fresh pumpkins ready for homemade pumpkin pie or sweets.

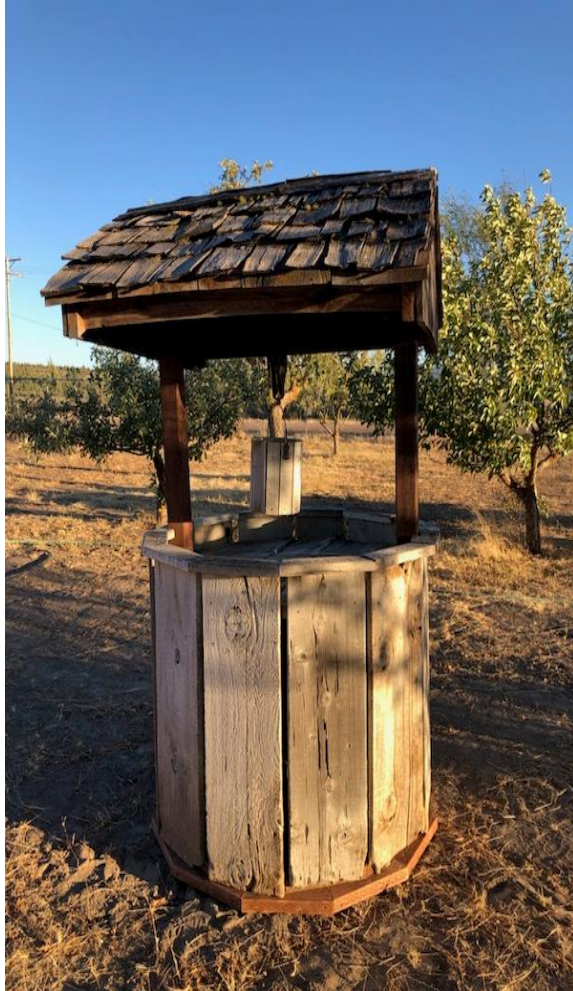
These are all nice reminders of present joys
of summer wildflowers
and trees bearing fruit for harvest season around the corner.

Ginger is not only in every baking, cooking or tea recipe.
The Mr. gingerbread brown sugar saver from Christmas
is ready for a fresh batch of holiday baking.



Wishing Well Restored

By Nail puller in Training



Father in law built the wishing well for his wife many years ago. Over the past 2 winters it has fallen into disrepair. I feared it would not survive another winter. Mostly rebuilt with preserved roof and outer boards. Now should last a few more years. Planning to re-shingle the roof in the next year.

Shasta Sovereign's Question: who would you make a wishing well for? What would you wish for?



Cookies

By Patti

Part 1

When I was a child, my mom made and fashioned Christmas. One Christmas, I got a Pee PEE Babydoll. I thought that was the coolest thing. I think that was the first doll I ever got. She also likes to sew, so one year I got a raggy Anna doll. Once, I got a more grown-up doll.

Part 2

My dad worked on the railroad and he would bring bananas and oranges. He also bought ribbon candy. We would go out in the woods and cut a tree. We strung popcorn and strung it over the tree. We had tinsel regular lights and bubble lights.

When we got to be teens, my brother brought his bride. We went to the woods to cut the tree. My brother's wife didn't realize she had to go potty before going to get a tree. Plus she was from Texas, where the ground is very flat. We climbed the mountain, which was so beautiful. Wouldn't you know, she had to pee! We told her to just stoop and pee. She stooped sideways instead of downhill. So that's when she peed on the brand new cowboy boots. When we heard an earth curdling scream, we thought she fell off the side of the mountain

Part 3

My brother loved ginger cookies, he called them the "hot rod" cookies. I didn't make a gingerbread house till my grandchildren were toddlers. That was fun!!!

*These are glimpses of my past when re-visiting my life.



Smokey the Bear balloon

By Rhonda



Taken at the Montague Hot Air Balloon festival in September 2024

Shasta Sovereign's Question: if you could pick someone to fly high with, who would it be?



Do I Go 14 or 14A

By Rtraffic

I turned 60 last year, and it was a time of reflection. One of my thoughts always went back to a crazy mountain pass that my mom took when I was 9 or 10 in the early seventy's. I came from California, but my dad took a job in Ohio, so every summer, my mom would load up the station wagon, and off we would go to CA. I loved the adventure of travel and have fond memories.

However, for some reason at that time, I had an irrational fear of heights on roads. That summer, my mom took us kids across Wyoming over the Bighorn Mountains, taking us to Cody and Yellowstone, where she worked right after graduating from High School. All I could remember was there was a road that hung off the side of a cliff, and only God would understand who the hell would build it or drive it. I was scared out of my mind when we drove the road. (add to it my sister going on about how we were going to drive off the road and DIE in a flaming crash).

Well, this summer, I got my chance to drive it again, but which way? Go US 14 or 14A. I asked around, but didn't get an answer. Thinking back, we hung to the north so I would go that way. Also, Sturgis was going on, so it seemed more motorcycles went US 14A. Bikers always know the cool routes

So, off we went heading east on US 14A. The funny thing was that hours later as we started to approach the mountain, I noticed that there seemed to be a huge mine on the side of the mountain. Ten minutes later, it saw it was not a mine, but the road. It looked crazy high on the mountainside, but at that moment, I knew that US 14A was the right way to go. I drove it, and although I conquered my fears of heights years ago, I was able to overwrite my old memory with good ones.



The YOU ARE DOOMED sign at the top for westbound drivers



O OH MY GOD, curve, just past the lookout. The road was perched on 100-200' high concrete retaining walls (not in the picture)



Looking down at the road (note, just around the curve the picture above was taken).

Shasta Sovereign's Question: when was the last time you drove down memory lane? How did you rewrite old memories?



Burnt Cookie

By Samara

In Heidelberg, around 1963, I was sitting in a stairwell with about five other fifth-graders. We were testing differences between Catholics and Protestants.

One eleven year old boy, fresh from catechism, stated, "Protestants, were like burnt cookies."

"What kind of cookie?", a Protestant responded.

"You know, the kind with arms and legs.", the Catholic answered.

"Gingerbread cookies!!", the Protestants agreed.

"Yeah, those cookies." said the Catholic.

"So, then, what happens to the burnt cookies?", ventured a Protestant.

"You get thrown away, stupid. Who wants a burnt cookie?", confirmed the Catholic.

Sanatif

By Winged Samara



Hand and machine pieced, medallion quilt top (to be quilted)



You Can't Catch me

By SKS

The story of the gingerbread man
Reminds me of my recent challenges
Of spiritual warfare in my life.
Things were really bad
And I felt like giving up.
So I turned to my higher power,
And now I can yell at the evil one,
YOU CAN'T CATCH ME,
I am saved by the holy one.

Spider Man

By SKS





Where's my cookie?

By SKS





Never too Old to Feel Young again at the Fairgrounds
By Spilly the Always Reinventive Gypsy



“Out of the Box, but really in the Box” painting



Homemade Warm Cookie Memories

By Spilly the Always Reinventive Gypsy

What's better than making Homemade Butter Cookies with your family, laughing and giggling, using the fun cookie press making fun shapes like, stars, trees, bars, hearts, and other vintage designs? Then once they're baked, dipping them in chocolate and sprinkles of all different colors for each exciting holiday. Then once the cookies are decorated and everyone has snuck a bite of their favorite one, the rest goes in the Beloved Family Cookie Jar for that mid-night snack. Yum Homemade Warm Cookie Memories



Here's my Cookie painting. It's of my vintage cookie jars, the one that I grew up with.



To Be or Not to Be

A Book Review on *How to Say Babylon* by Safiya Sinclair

By Sri

I didn't choose this book to read. One of the librarians who have heard snippets of my unusual life put it on hold for me without me knowing. When I checked it out and read a little of what it is about I was instantly interested.

Daily and nearly moment to moment I contemplate my upbringing and how it impacts me even now. I try to sift through it all, trying to find the source of the PTSD and anxiety that plagues and holds me back in life. I look for truths and gifts from the mountain of information I had drilled into me from the youngest age. I look for commonalities in others who may have had a similar upbringing to mine, especially if they have found a way to integrate into the world outside of a religion and be successful in life (and I know there is no set ideal for what that looks like). Even more so if they suffered abuse in a religious cult.

I am not anti the religion I was raised in. Many, if not most of its principles make the most sense to me in describing the nature of life, death and beyond. I know there is a movement becoming more rampant in society where decrying God and worship of a Supreme Being is preferred along with rejecting basic concepts such as only two genders. I am weary of people coming from that place and trying to sway me that way. But still I opened my mind and read this book.

I never knew much about the Rastafarians. I had seen them over the years at gatherings in California. Los Angeles, Topanga, Grateful Dead concerts (I only went to one show with my oldest son when he was a baby to make his father overjoyed, the other times I went with other Hare Krsnas in Denver, Colorado to perform harinama in the parking lot outside the show), Venice Beach, to name a few. They were always very colorful and peaceful, full of music and good cheer. Always a vibe of pot around them. I have known a couple families: white woman with dreads with her Rasta man and their cute and charming children.

I never thought of them as being in a religion. At least not the kind of super strict religion I was raised in. So when I contemplated reading the book I was curious about how much of whatever Safiya was attempting to gain freedom from had to do with the religion.

With the exception of the concept of women being unclean at certain times and their purpose being solely to have children and be inferior to men, (something which also existed in the religion of my upbringing), the other rules were not so detrimental to freedom for humans.

Exactly the same as in my religion, vegetarianism, abstaining from drinking alcohol and smoking cigarettes and respecting and being close to nature, are all good, clean, (although ascetic for some), healthy habits. Also, relying more on natural cures vs modern medicine for healing proved to keep Safiya and her siblings healthy. Her mother was able to heal the children of ailments with her loving intent and hands.

One rule that was harder to live with was having to grow dreadlocks. Our religion had the forced shaved head with the little tuft or pony tail at the crown (sikha) for the males and the covering of hair for the females (even as a little girl I had to do this). Safiya and her siblings had to attend public school with the dreads. And even the us-against-them attitude (God's righteous people vs



Babylon for Rastafarian, material world and Maya for mine and add in whites against blacks in the case of Jamaican Rastafarianism) that Rastafarian and my religion have was not enough to protect them from the bullying and general mistreatment by prejudiced students. Still they all excelled academically.

Her father's volatility and strictness which it seems was being attributed to the concept that he was to be a godhead or king in his home, (perverted concepts of the religion) controlling mainly the females in his household, caused him to be abusive. I got the impression that he was deeply and irreparably hurt from his past of abandonment by a mother who was pregnant with him when she was only 13 years old and never knowing who his dad was and then being ousted from his home again when he was 18 and his mom had found a new man.

The feeling of belonging and being in the right (and knowing he was better than the others living a materialistic life) that he got from the religion was so important to him. It replaced any so-called family he had been born into. And then having permission to be like a God to the people of his little kingdom was something he did not ever want to lose.

I don't blame the religion or its principles for making Safiya's father an abusive man. It kind of reminds me of the concept of the Force from Star Wars. The power is there. It can be used for light or for dark. He used it for his purposes and the evil that was done to him came through, pushing aside the love he intended underneath it all.

The idea that her and her siblings in order to get out from under their dad's reign would eat meat at other relatives' or friends' homes any chance they got was disappointing to me. Many of my childhood friends, when they came of age, in order to feel free from the hold the religion had on them did the same thing. I never subscribed to that point of view. And even doing that and other things such as chopping off her deadlocks did not have the desired effect for Safiya, not totally. She was not feeling the total freedom she sought.

The book really is lovely at the end. I would read the whole book again just to experience again all of the emotion and comfort that comes from acceptance and admittance of one's wrongs, and ultimately opening of one's heart even when they were wronged and from such a young age.

There was something she wrote in the end which made me accepting of my unique upbringing. At a huge festival where she read her poems she gave a speech. She talked a little about her strict upbringing. And then said: "You might not know from looking at me, but I still have some Rasta in my heart." That brought me to tears.

That and the fact that I wasn't abused nearly as badly as she was (and by her own father, no less) at least physically, made me want to cherish my childhood and upbringing as a Hare Krsna even more.

I highly recommend this book.

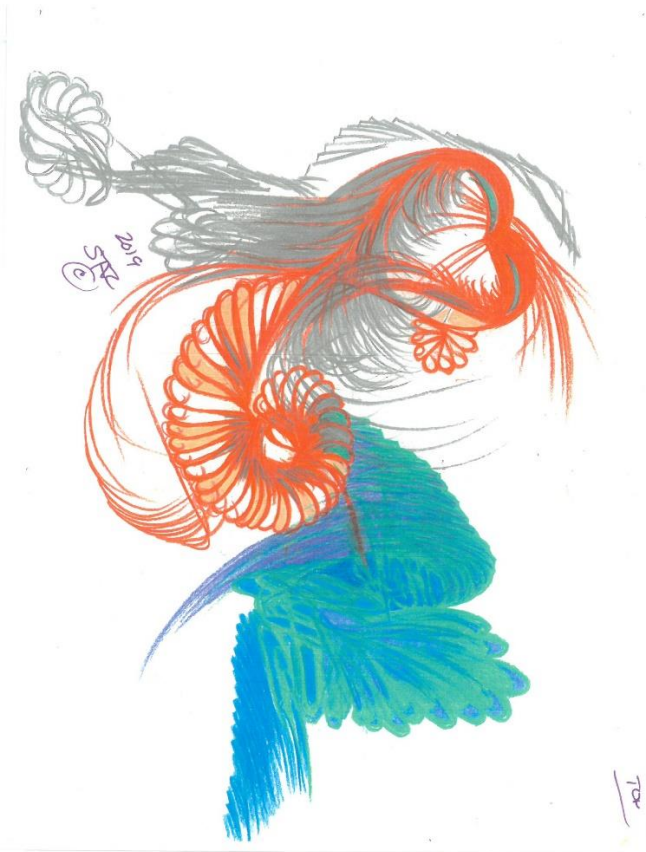


Photo of me accepting an award for all of us raised in the Hare Krsna boarding school system in front of the Hare Krsna headquarters temple in Los Angeles. This was at a time when I had just experienced a tragic loss: My boyfriend had been fatally injured in a motorcycle accident and had passed away. I was so grateful for the religion of my upbringing and the community who kept me close and offered me solace.

Shasta Sovereign's Question: How has religion helped you recently?



Untitled
By Star



**THE FAIR**

By Starboyjim

Someone asks, what about “The fair?”

How many faces does a fair wear?

Is it political, as in “fair play for all?”

Is it community, as in “County fair?”

Or perhaps it refers to a type of skin and hair coloring?

What if it refers to the weather, as in “fair skies?”

The Fair could be a way to define athletic contests, “fair play.”

There are many, very many uses for the sign “the fair.” Noun, verb, adverb, adjective and more ways to signify, to display or describe with this flexible and deep word signifier. We all share these signs, selecting them usually for practical purposes.

The question now is – which is the content here?

* * *

HARD

By Starboyjim

It's hard to live in

The expected world

At least, it is for me.

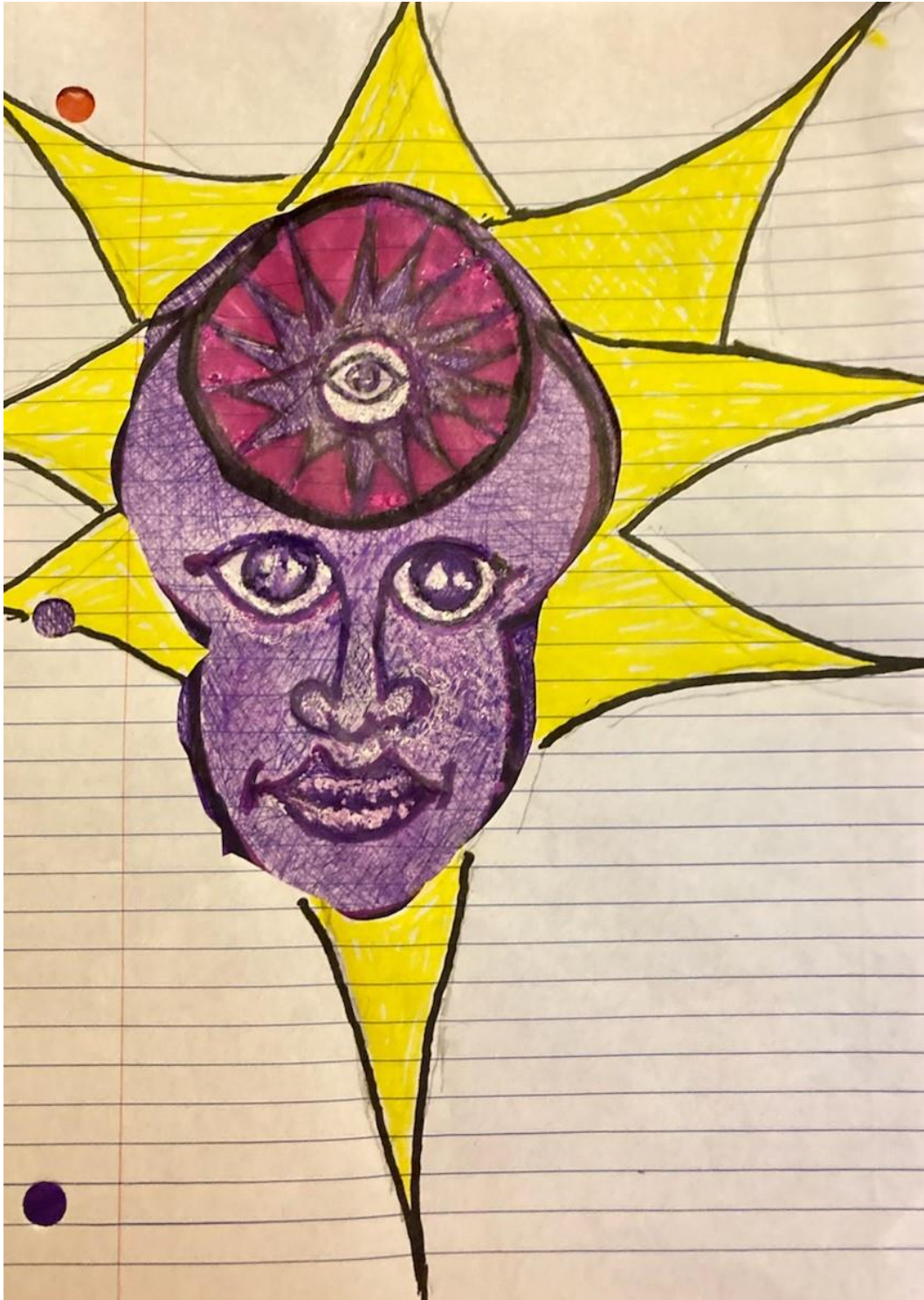
It's hard to live

In the world of what should be

At least, it is for me.



Zyenna the Princess Warrior
By Steven G





My EIPHANY

By TBD

Why is it so hard to pick up my pen and write or journal???

It's because if I put it on paper, then it's REAL!!

Not just a memory anymore...

TBD...

Shasta Sovereign's Question: When was the last time you put your memories to paper? What was it like?



The Comfort of a Cookie

By The Frontier Nurse

There is just something comforting about my mom's warm oatmeal chocolate chip cookie bars. They were always a special treat when we were growing up. I found myself making them on my own after I moved away from home and wanted something familiar and cozy to ward off a little of the homesickness I was experiencing.

Come to think of it, there are a few important people in my life who make a particular cookie or dessert that when you think of them or eat them an extra pleasant emotional response accompanies it. My grandma on my dad's side makes no bake peanut butter cookies, sugar cookies, and scones that all warm my heart and soul when I eat them. My grandma on my mom's side makes sour cream chocolate cake from scratch and raisin bran muffins that I simply can't resist. Both of those women are in their 90's, and I'm very fortunate they are both alive and live near me.

I get in the mood to bake, especially in the Fall as the temperatures drop and the leaves start to change colors and fall. I made those oatmeal chocolate chip cookie bars with my kids last week, and it was such a joy to be able to share something with them that was so special to me when I was growing up. I hope to pass on sweet memories of baking with the generations to come also.

There is something to be said, I think, about the power of memories that are attached to multiple senses like taste, smell, and touch. This, unfortunately, can be true for both positive and negative memories. Trauma responses can quickly be triggered by the 5 senses, and sometimes, very unexpectedly.

It could be a whiff of familiar perfume or cologne fragrance on a passing stranger that could bring back an intense memory or emotion connected to former partner or loved one. The smell of Copenhagen chewing tobacco makes me think of my "Pops" because he always had a can of it in his shirt pocket when I was sitting up on his lap in his recliner chair.

It wasn't until I got asked to complete a writing assignment about cookies or some kind of dessert that I realized what kind of emotional attachment I had with baking and the memories associated with it. It brought a whole new meaning to the term "comfort food" for me. It also inspired me to call my grandma and plan to make some muffins this weekend while there is yet still time.



Painted Pillar
By Valerie



This is a pillar that I painted.



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